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UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Department of Economics

New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903

Argentina

February 28, 1981

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General Alexander M. Haig, Jr.  
Secretary of State  
Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This morning, on receiving word of the detention and possible torture by Argentine authorities of a group including Dr. José Westerkamp, former professor of physics at the National University of Buenos Aires, I sent the attached letter to President Jorge Rafael Videla of Argentina.

Dr. Westerkamp is well known in the North American scientific community and can by no stretch of the imagination be said to have been engaged in terrorist or guerrilla activities. He has good reason to be concerned about the abuse of human rights in Argentina, as his own son has been in prison for some five years and has been subjected to brutal treatment by official authorities.

I hope that the Department of State, through its Embassy in Buenos Aires, will make the strongest representations to the Argentine government urging the early release, on humanitarian grounds, of Dr. Westerkamp and others arrested with him, and that they be spared from physical mistreatment.

Although it is now commonly understood that the administration of President Reagan intends to substitute quiet diplomacy for public criticism in dealing with matters of human rights, the Argentine government should be given clear notice that this change in United States policy does not provide an opportunity to resume officially sanctioned sadistic treatment of persons, particularly those innocent of terrorist or guerilla activities. The Argentine government must be made aware that it has a responsibility to world opinion and that considerations of national security never

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/TPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ( ) In Part ( ) In Full

( ) Classify as ( ) Extend as ( ) Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

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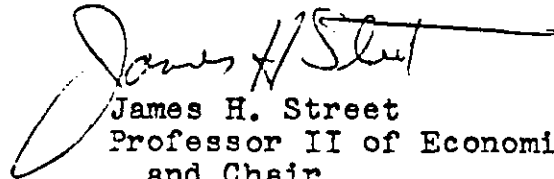
General Alexander M. Haig, Jr.

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justify the detention and physical abuse of persons who have committed no crime. I hope that the Department of State will use its good offices to express these concerns to the appropriate authorities in the government of Argentina.

With sincere good wishes for your initiatives as our new Secretary of State.

Respectfully,

  
James H. Street  
Professor II of Economics  
and Chair

Copy to Ernest W. Lefever, Esq. ✓  
Assistant Secretary of State  
for Human Rights and  
Humanitarian Affairs

Enc.: Letter to His Excellency,  
The President of the Republic  
of Argentina  
General Jorge Rafael Videla